

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 019107
ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-05 DHA-02 H-01
SS-15 SSO-00 /041 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/B - MR. PACE:LEE
APPROVED BY ARA - WHLUERS
ARA/AND - FJDEVINE
L/NM - LFIELDS

-----272343Z 076296 /62
O 272231Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ IMMEDIATE

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STADIS/////////////////////////////////
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM LUERS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:CASC, BL

SUBJECT:AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA: TEAM VISIT

REFS: (A) LA PAZ 692 (B) LA PAZ 690

1. AFTER GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE VIEWS OUT-
LINED BY YOU IN REFTTEL B, AND TO MINISTER OF INTERIOR
PEREDA'S OBVIOUS PREFERENCE FOR A DEFERRAL OR CANCELLATION
OF THE TEAM VISIT, WE HAVE DECIDED ON BALANCE THAT WE SHOULD
PROCEED WITH THE VISIT ON A REDUCED SCALE. WE CONTINUE TO
BELIEVE THAT THE TEAM'S PURPOSE: TO LEARN ALL THE AVAIL-
ABLE FACTS ABOUT THE PRISONERS' PHYSICAL AND LEGAL SITUATION,
IS A VALID ONE. THIS OBJECTIVE REFLECTS A LEGITIMATE USG
INTEREST IN THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF OUR CITIZENS OVERSEAS.

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NO INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF BOLIVIA IS IM-
PLIED OR INTENDED BY SUCH A FACT-FINDING VISIT. PLEASE IN-
FORM MINISTER PEREDA, THEREFORE, THAT THE TEAM WILL VISIT
BOLIVIA IN THE ABSENCE OF A SPECIFIC GOB PROHIBITION OF THE
VISIT AND WILL BE CAREFULLY DEFINED AND INSTRUCTED IN SUCH
A WAY AS TO AVOID IMPROPER INTRUSION OR INTERVENTION IN
BOLIVIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

2. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF CALLING INTO QUESTION THE MINISTER'S GOOD FAITH. TO THE CONTRARY, THE NEWS THAT HE

RESOLUTION OF A NUMBER OF THE CASES, AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF THE AMERICAN CITIZENS INVOLVED, IS VERY WELCOME TO US. BUT THE GROWING LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST IN THIS ISSUE DOES NOT PERMIT US TO WAIT PASSIVELY UPON THE GOB'S ACTION IN THIS MATTER. MANY PARENTS AND RELATIVES OF US CITIZEN PRISONERS FEEL THAT THEIR EXPECTATIONS FOR RAPID RESOLUTION OF THESE CASES WERE RAISED TOO OFTEN IN THE PAST. WE INTEND TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS, THEREFORE, IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFF, AVOIDING SPECIFIC MENTION OF A THIRTY-DAY TIMETABLE AND REFRAINING FROM SPECULATION ON THE LIKELY SENTENCES TO BE IMPOSED, EVEN IN THE CASES OF MINOR OFFENDERS.

3. FOR REASONS OF EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY, WE HAVE DECIDED TO LIMIT THE TEAM'S MEMBERSHIP TO THREE PERSONS: MR. MOSKOWITZ, MR. FIELDS AND PROFESSOR BALDWIN. THIS SMALLER GROUP WILL RETAIN THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AREA AND LANGUAGE EXPERTISE, LEGAL EXPERIENCE IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD AND THE PRESENCE OF A QUALIFIED OUTSIDE OBSERVER. BOLIVIA DESK OFFICER PACE WILL SERVE AS THE WASHINGTON LIAISON FOR THE TEAM DURING ITS VISIT, WHILE MR. STEVENS AND HIS STAFF IN SCS WILL CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING VOLUME OF FAMILY AND CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES ON INDIVIDUAL PRISONER CASES. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR TEAM MEMBERS AT THE HOTEL LIBERTADOR (ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINGLE AND ONE DOUBLE), OR AT THE HOTEL LA PAZ (THREE SINGLES). THE TEAM WILL ARRIVE IN LA PAZ VIA BRANIFF 909 AT 2215 ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 29.

4. FYI: TEAM LEADER MOSKOWITZ AND DESK OFFICER PACE MET WITH AMBASSADOR CRESPO ON JANUARY 26 TO DISCUSS THE NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TEAM'S VISIT TO BOLIVIA. WHILE ACCEPTING THE UTILITY OF AN IMPARTIAL STUDY OF THE PRISONERS' SITUATION, CRESPO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT UNSPECIFIED GROUPS WERE SEEKING TO MAKE PROPAGANDA POINTS AGAINST THE GOB OVER THE PRISONERS ISSUE. CRESPO INDICATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD REACT NEGATIVELY TO PRESSURES THAT SUCH GROUPS MIGHT EXERT ON BOLIVIA FOR THE PRISONERS' RELEASE. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO INFORMED US THAT THE PARENTS' LOBBY IS ORGANIZING WHAT IT TERMS A "MASS MEETING" IN WASHINGTON DURING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7 TO ATTRACT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION TO THEIR CONCERNS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS WELFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE019107
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MR. PACE:LEE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770030-0558
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770111/aaaaajmd.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60b0b5cf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 77 LA PAZ 692, 77 LA PAZ 690
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3480389
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA: TEAM VISIT
TAGS: CASC, BL, US
To: LA PAZ
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60b0b5cf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009